



MEETING MINUTES

U.S. 30

Environmental Impact Statement & Phase I Design Report

Date: April 15, 2010

Time: 5:00pm

Location: Odell Public Library, Morrison, Illinois

Subject: Stakeholder Meeting – Businesses of Morrison

The purpose of meeting was to discuss the concerns of the businesses of Morrison in regard to a potential bypass of Morrison with the construction of a new U.S. 30 route. The stakeholder group that was being addressed is the Area Business Development Alliance.

AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Meeting Objectives & Ground Rules
3. Project Overview
4. Project Study Process
5. Where are we in the Process?
6. Bypass Study
7. Questions Received from Morrison Businesses

INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Bob Vaughn of the Area Business Development Alliance opened the meeting by thanking IDOT for attending and providing information in regard to the U.S. 30 project study.

Ms. Becky Marruffo of IDOT next introduced the IDOT staff in attendance, and Mr. Mike Walton of Volkert introduced the consultant team.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

Ms. Marruffo went on to state that IDOT's objective for this meeting was to provide information as it pertains to the businesses of Morrison in regard to the U.S. 30 project, gather input from the business community, and answer questions from the business community. Although advertised by the Area Businesses Development Alliance as a public meeting, it should actually be considered a stakeholder meeting.

GROUND RULES

In order to make the best use of the time, some ground rules were established:

1. Input from all participants is valued and considered
2. Please hold questions until after the presentation
3. Advocate respectful interaction of all parties
4. Wrap up meeting by 7 pm

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Mr. Walton provided a project overview:

- Project limits are from IL 136 east of Fulton heading east to IL 40 in Rock Falls
- The project study area is approximately 24 miles long and 10 miles wide

With the help of the Community Advisory Group (CAG), a problem statement for the project was created: “The problem with US 30 in Whiteside County from Fulton to Rock Falls is increasing traffic volume and congestion which overloads the area-wide traffic system, compromises safety, mobility and reduces the quality of life of the adjacent communities. There is a need for improved economic development and accessibility to the region while preserving agricultural and environmentally significant areas.”

This problem statement helped develop the Purpose & Need Statement for the project. A Purpose & Need Statement is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. The alternatives to be considered and the preferred alternative must address the Purpose & Need. The goals of the Purpose & Need Statement for this project are:

1. Reduce Traffic Congestion
 - Current and projected average daily traffic volumes in Morrison exceed 10,000.
2. Improve Traffic Capacity
 - Current and projected LOS in Morrison are the lowest in the study area.
3. Improve Safety
 - Factors for increased accident potential include high traffic, low LOS, intersections, side friction, sight distance, roadway geometry.
4. Accommodate Freight
 - Truck traffic is high in Morrison. The downtown is an incompatible environment for truck traffic.
5. Establish Roadway Continuity



- In the long-term provide a continuous stretch of 4-lane highway throughout the study area.

PROJECT STUDY PROCESS

Mr. Walton went on to explain the project study process:

- The level of effort necessary in order to complete an environmental study and Phase I Design Report for a project of this size requires an EIS to be conducted. This requirement comes from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which states that government agencies must be responsible for their actions and the resulting impacts to the environment. The EIS is currently being developed.
- The engineering studies for this project are ongoing and follow DOT design policies and guidelines. As a part of this work, efforts to minimize environmental impacts and displacements are being made.
- The project has incorporated a highly intensive process of public involvement called Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). CSS is an approach that strives to :
 - Strike a balance between cost, safety, mobility, community and the environment.
 - Apply flexibility in the design to fit the project to its surroundings.
 - Involve stakeholders in the decision-making process.
 - Project Study Group (PSG) – FHWA, DOT, Public Agencies
 - Community Advisory Group (CAG) – Cross Section of Stakeholders
 - Stakeholder Meetings
 - Public Meetings

WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

Mr. Walton next explained that the following milestones have been achieved with the help of the Project Study Group (PSG) and Community Advisory (CAG):

- Corridors were identified within the study area: Twenty-eight corridors were identified. The corridors were established at a width of 1400 feet.
- Several alternative alignments have been developed and analyzed within the corridors.
- Six alternative alignments at a width of approximately 220 feet are currently under consideration in addition to a NO BUILD alternative. These alternative alignments were illustrated in the latest U.S. 30 newsletter.

The next step in the project's process is to complete the Draft EIS and go to a Public Hearing. After that process, a recommended alignment will be chosen. This will be accomplished with the help of the PSG and CAG and will involve a public input during the Public Hearing.

BYPASS STUDY

Ms. Jacquot presented this portion and stated that significant concerns have been expressed by the members of the Morrison Business Community regarding the potential impacts of a US 30 bypass. A Bypass Study is currently under development by IDOT to thoroughly study any potential impacts to the businesses of Morrison.

Bypass Study Guidelines established in IDOT's Community Impact Assessment manual will be utilized in order to complete the study. The following is a summary of what will be in the report:

1. Business Activity

- Identify traffic-dependent and non-traffic dependent businesses along U.S. 30 and within downtown Morrison
 - ❖ Typically Traffic-Dependent Businesses Examples: Restaurant, lounge, convenience stores, confectionery, gas stations, hotel, motel, vegetable stand
 - ❖ Traffic-Dependency Uncertain: Garden center, hardware, food market, antiques, art/craft/gift, video, recreational, boat sales/service, flea markets
 - ❖ Typically Not Traffic-Dependent Examples: Bank, medical services, personal grooming, pharmacy, auto sales/parts, legal, furniture, veterinary, industrial, real estate agency, laundry, newspaper/printing, insurance, mortuary, appliance stores/repair
- Determine anticipated effects of potential business closings (qualitatively in terms of sales and property taxes)
- Identify potential for new businesses due to the bypass

2. Social/Community Characteristics

- Bypass Effects on Community Cohesion
- Anticipated Access Changes
- Increased/Decreased Safety
- Effects on Noise

3. Mitigation/Suggestions

- Engage Stakeholders
- Access
- Signing
- Zoning policies
- Tax incentives
- Advertising Campaigns
- Logo Identification



Ms. Jacquot stated that some of the mitigation efforts IDOT could potentially be a part of is providing access and signage. She also stated that it was important to note there are many mitigation efforts the city of Morrison can carry out themselves in anticipation of a bypass such as establishing a land use plan, economic development plan, zoning policies, offering tax incentives, start an advertising campaign for the city and creating a logo that can be identified with the city of Morrison.

A draft of this Bypass Study will be available for review by the businesses of Morrison in September.

PRIMARY QUESTION FROM THE BUSINESSES OF MORRISON

The next portion of the meeting, Ms. Marruffo provided an answer to what seemed to be one of the primary questions from the businesses of Morrison. The question is "Why is IDOT not proposing to widen U.S. 30 through town?" It was explained that in 2004, IDOT completed a study that proposed to widen U.S. 30 to a three-lane through town from IL 78 North to French Creek. The public voiced such strong opposition to the project that the project limits were reduced to Jackson Street to French Creek. It was further explained that the project currently being proposed is for the construction of a four-lane transportation corridor. Therefore, a three-lane widening would not meet the policy for which this project is being planned. In addition, it would not meet the goals of the Purpose & Need Statement. Lastly, a four-lane section through town would cause even more extensive impacts than those identified in the 2004 study, which include:

- Potential displacements of churches, gas stations, historic properties, businesses and residences would result.
- A reduction in sales and property tax receipts would result from any such displacements.
- High truck traffic volumes would continue to cause noise and safety concerns within the business and residential areas through town.

QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MORRISON BUSINESSES

The last portion of the meeting consisted of Mr. Gil Janes reading questions submitted by the Morrison business community prior to the meeting and then providing the answer. After this the remainder of the meeting was in an "open house" format where individuals could speak with the IDOT and consultant staff one on one.

The following are the questions and answers:



1. Is this Rt. 30 bypass still being considered? If so, where will it go exactly? 4 lane? Who's paying for it?

Yes, a bypass alignment is still under consideration. IDOT is currently studying six alternative alignments for US 30 and a recommendation for a final alignment has not yet been made. The roadway configuration under study for this project is a 4-lane expressway. A 4-lane configuration has been determined to be necessary based on the projected traffic volumes for the corridor and the established purpose and need for the project.

Construction funding is not currently available. If funding becomes available in the future it will most likely include a mix of federal and state funding, and may also include local funds.

2. Has the state decided on a north or south route for the bypass?

No, a final alignment has not been determined. Six alternatives are still under study, which include both north and south alignments.

3. When is the estimated date of construction for the bypass?

Construction timing will be dependent on the availability of funding for the project. No construction funding is currently available for this project. At a minimum, preliminary design, final design & land acquisition will require another 8 to 10 years, all of which must be completed prior to beginning construction of the project if funding does become available.

4. Why aren't the businesses being represented on the CAG group as we are the folks directly affected one way or another? It seems that the group was cherry picked to influence the process in the direction that benefits Clinton, Fulton and Rock Falls at the expense of Morrison.

The CAG was selected by gathering information regarding groups, organizations, and agencies from the communities within the project study area representing a wide cross-section of people and interests. In addition, plat maps were researched to identify farm owners, property owners, and home owners from various areas within the project study area. IDOT was careful to select members throughout the project study area with the goal of creating an unbiased group. The intention of CAG members is to serve as your representatives and to be a pipeline for information exchange to and from the project development team. There are thousands of people who will be affected by the project. It is unmanageable to involve such a large number of people directly in the design process. Therefore, a specific group of people were selected to represent the interests of many.



IDOT has hosted a total of five CAG meetings since the inception of the US 30 Phase I Study. The Department believed that the businesses of Morrison were effectively represented because the CAG members have clearly expressed that economic

development is one of the primary issues associated with this project. This is evidenced within the key issues stated by CAG members during their September 12, 2007 meeting, as follows:

- Impacts to Morrison Downtown Business District & Route 30 Businesses
- Economic Impacts – Good and Bad in Morrison
- Business Displacements in Morrison
- Stay close to Morrison & not adversely affect
- Potential loss of downtown Morrison business
- Staying as close to Morrison in order to not by-pass the City

Additionally, the CAG members developed the following problem statement:

“The problem with US 30 in Whiteside County from Fulton to Rock Falls is increasing in traffic volume and congestion which overloads the area-wide traffic system, compromises safety, mobility and reduces the quality of life of the adjacent communities. There is a need for improved economic development and accessibility to the region while preserving agricultural and environmentally significant areas.”

A project Purpose and Need was developed in conjunction with the CAG that identifies key criteria that must be satisfied with any alternative:

1. Reduce Traffic Congestion
2. Improve Traffic Capacity
3. Improve Safety
4. Accommodate Freight
5. Establish Roadway Continuity

If these criteria are not satisfied by a specific alternative, then that alternative will be considered unacceptable.

We have recently received correspondence from several business owners in the area of downtown Morrison and understand that they feel their interests are not being taken into consideration. We were disappointed to learn that this is the case, as one of the most significant goals of this study is to hear, acknowledge and consider concerns of stakeholders during the development of the proposed roadway design. The Department is committed to this goal and will take additional steps as necessary to ensure that business



owners and all other stakeholders are provided with ample opportunities to provide input to the project team.

The minutes for all CAG meetings, the problem statement, and a roster of CAG members are located on the project website at <http://www.dot.il.gov/us30/getinvolved2.html>.

5. Would the State reconsider the three-lane project that they had originally planned through Morrison?

The study that proposed the construction of a three-lane roadway section from IL 78 (N) to French Creek in Morrison was completed in 2004. As a direct result of public comments and concerns, the project length was reduced to extend only from Jackson Street to French Creek. Resurfacing and maintenance work has been performed on the remaining roadway section, including the replacement of the bridge carrying US 30 over Rock Creek. No additional improvements to this section of roadway are funded at this point in time.

The construction of a three-lane roadway would not eliminate the safety and operational concerns associated with the non-compatible uses of the corridor with large truck traffic, increasing volumes of traffic, narrow lanes, sidewalks adjacent to the roadway, school crossings, and farm equipment use. As a result, construction of a three-lane roadway through the downtown area would not eliminate the need for a four-lane expressway routed outside of town to accommodate future traffic demands.

6. We have been told that the 4 lane bypass is needed, because of the traffic studies of the current highway 30 showing high traffic counts and safety issues, especially trucks. If the current situation is critical and the bypass may not be built within the next 15 years, what does IDOT plan to do in the interim?

As noted above, a project to construct a three-lane section was proposed for the downtown area several years ago, but due to public input the project was limited to improving the roadway between Jackson Street and French Creek. The replacement of the structure carrying US 30 over Rock Creek is currently underway. IDOT will continue to address the maintenance needs of the roadway including resurfacing and structural improvements as necessary to maintain the existing route.

7. Is there a plan "B" if the four- lane by pass is not built?

Several "plan B" options will be considered as the project study is developed. One possible option would be to construct a 2-lane bypass of Morrison as an initial step. Another option is to prioritize the various segments and construct a four-lane expressway within those segments. These options, as well as others, will be considered in determining the potential for roadway sections of independent utility that can be constructed if full funding for the



project is not available in the future. A “no-build” alternative will continue to be considered as a part of the study as well.

8. Would a 3 lane widening of Route 30 as it passes through Morrison satisfy the purpose and need statement of “To reduce traffic congestion, improve traffic capacity, improve safety, accommodate freight, and establish roadway continuity” ?

A three-lane roadway configuration could potentially reduce traffic congestion, improve traffic capacity, improve safety, and accommodate freight based on our current traffic volumes. However, the proposed project and its roadway design/alignment must accommodate not only the traffic that utilizes the roadway today, but that which is anticipated to utilize the route within the next 20 years. Based on our projected traffic volumes, a three-lane improvement would be insufficient to meet the goals of the purpose and need statement within the 20-year timeframe.

9. Have they considered building a truck bypass around Morrison that could later be incorporated into the four-lane bypass, as an interim solution to the safety and the high traffic counts?

If a bypass were to be constructed it would be open to all motorists. Enforcement and control of a “trucks only” alternative route around Morrison would be infeasible. Currently, the alternatives under study are for a four-lane expressway, but the initial construction of only two of the four lanes could be an option, if funding permitted.

10. What will be the impact on my downtown or Highway 30 business if a by-pass is built around Morrison?

Based on historical results of previous bypass projects, we understand that a bypass has the potential to bring both positive and negative impacts to frontage and downtown businesses within the City of Morrison. As an example, one potential benefit to building a bypass around the city could be the minimization of commercial truck traffic travelling through the downtown area. However, we also realize that this change in traffic patterns may have a negative impact on some businesses in the downtown area, particularly businesses that are traffic-dependent. The determination of both positive and negative impacts depends significantly on the characteristics (e.g. proximity to the existing route, access, signing, etc.) of the route that is selected for further study, as well as the type and nature of the business. The project team is presently completing a “Community Impact Analysis” to assist in identifying issues and concerns specific to Morrison and ways to minimize impacts and improve the situation for business in Morrison.



The city of Morrison can take various steps to ensure the vitality of their business district in anticipation of a potential bypass. These steps might include developing a Land Use Plan, developing an Economic Development Plan, developing a Zoning Plan, providing tax incentives for new businesses, becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG), conducting

an advertising campaign in order to encourage visitors to come to Morrison, and developing a logo that identifies Morrison. Many of these steps can be taken by the city regardless of the construction of a bypass in the future. Such an effort may have additional positive impacts, such as providing opportunities for the city to obtain financial grants as well as additional enhancement funding for projects within the city.

Also, it may be noted that 20-year traffic projections indicate that more traffic will travel on the existing alignment (up to 7100 vehicles per day) than that which will travel on a bypass alignment (4900 vehicles per day). The existing US 30 roadway will not be eliminated if a bypass route is constructed in the future. It will continue as either a Business Route or as a local road providing direct service to downtown Morrison.

11. With the economy the way it is, isn't it rather silly to bypass the town/businesses?

The Illinois DOT has the obligation and the responsibility to address capacity and safety concerns on the US Highway 30 corridor. The potential economic impacts of a bypass will be assessed as a part of the study, and we are working to ensure that the concerns of the business community are addressed during this process. In addition, it is well documented that bypasses often times have a positive effect on the business community if planned properly.

12. If a bypass is built, who will maintain the existing Route 30 through town?

Maintenance of the roadway could remain the responsibility of the State, or a jurisdictional transfer agreement could be developed between the State and a local entity (City, Township or County). This would be determined during the final design phase of the project, which is not currently funded.

13. Can the state help us help ourselves or is that a matter to take to our legislators?

Helping the community to help themselves by considering their input in the decision-making process and gathering their consensus is exactly what the public involvement process for this project is designed to do. The project team will continue to be available to provide information about the decisions taking place for this project. We will strive to ensure that the



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business community remains involved in this process, as well as all other members of the community. We continue to strive for all to be represented in the study and to keep our legislators involved and informed as well.

